

Testimony related to Bill #S2820

Kathy Marshall

Organization NA

978-807-9204

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on the recent passing of Police Reform by the Massachusetts Senate. While the public hearing process was delayed, the time is now to speak.

The current version of the legislation is not equitable. The job of a police officer is to protect and serve. The legislation in its current form creates many barriers and limitations to how successful our police community should and needs to be.

This bill contains a fair amount of additional training for officers. Knowledge is power. Everyone benefits from education that is meaningful, realistic and job related

The proposed bill would ban chokeholds, limit the use of tear gas, license all law enforcement officers and train them in the history of racism. Again, these items appear to have merit and could be deemed useful

The legislation lacks legal protection for police and other public employees. This deficit in the bill is lacking, reckless and irresponsible. Qualified immunity has an authentic purpose. This current provision would leave first responders doubting themselves and possibility their response while on the job. There are many other mechanisms in place as well as the new requirements suggested that allow for police accountability.

Police officers, perform vital tasks that require split-second decisions in stressful circumstances. Taking away qualified immunity could lead to officers being hesitant to act when the situation necessitates quick thoughtful action.

Qualified immunity is a critical legal principle that protects our front line of responders from lawsuits seeking monetary damages. A system without this immunity will lead to legal chaos and frivolous lawsuits that should outrage our tax payers. Please consider maintaining this very important item in the Legislation.

Thank you for your time and attention.